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AD TIBERIM

МЯКИША



By
Brewer Mattocks
PAX ROMA—or the
Closing of the Gates of
War, 1888,
out of print.

AD · TIBERIM
OR
THE · FALL · OF · THE · GRACCHI
AN · EPIC-BALLAD · OF · THE
ROMAN · REPUBLIC

BY
BREWER · MATTOCKS

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MDCCCLXXXVIII

NOTE—TO MY COMRADE IN THE SERVICE, ARCHBISHOP IRELAND,—MOST AMERICAN OF AMERICANS, YET "THE NOBLEST ROMAN OF US ALL" AM I INDEBTED FOR THE FELICITY OF THIS INSCRIPTION. B. M.

DEMOCRACY has always held as the law of Life, and by which its Kingdoms have been ruled. With Man's first sitting as a junior member in the Parliament of Life he added not to democracy, and with the lapse of his term of service he will in no whit have lessened natural law.

The Epic of the Republic, with its epochs, eras and episodes, is a continued story, whose plot—the evolution of man's representative self-rule, with no change is still unfolding itself.

While the Republic was not originated by the Romans, the idea is essentially Roman, and by Rome was it named, and from whom have we inherited more than from our immediate forbears, the Anglo-Saxons. Scratch an American and you will find a primitive Roman! With the episode of the Gracchi the Conscript Fathers begin to fade into tradition while historical republicanism begins. As political brothers they spoke our language, seemed actuated by our motives, while their mistaken methods are largely ours. We do not make demigods of them. More, they are still with us in the flesh; moreover, as democratic demagogues—leaders of the people—they appeal to us; furthermore, they first stood for civic righteousness as we understand it. Yes, while history repeats itself there must be historical analogies, and wise the State which wisely heeds them!

The author makes no excuse for withholding for a generation what was partly written in 1888, and often since. The times are not always in our hands; yet, for the Republic, what was timely yesterday, is today, while tomorrow will not lessen its timeliness. With every session a new century of Congress begins.

B. M.

*Edgewood Park,
Pittsburgh, Pa., September 12, 1911.*

PROEM

What enters into Manhood,
And to what conforms the plan
Whose outcome is the character
In what goes to make the Man?

True Manhood! Nay, To qualify,
Or to question will undo—
And yet unmake thro adjective,
For all manhood must be true;

Nor manhood's mere manliness
As a garment to be worn
Upon occasion, cleansed when soiled,
Or put by, or patched when torn.

To form are garments fitted,
Fancy-fashioned for the day;
No manhood can fit fancy, or
When old-fashioned, disarray;

Or tender to occasion
Which it may, or not create.
Nay, nay, not so, occasion may,—
More, it must on manhood wait!

Full many gifts a mountain bears,
And great largess hath to give;
While far beyond man's takings is
All its vast prerogative;

Yet having all its holdings
Which he may account of worth
It still stands to point heavenward
And mark pathways for the earth;

And yet with form dismantled,
Stripped fir, and larch, and pine,
And rived its treasury vaults of gems,
Then its precious ores bemine;

When, toppled peak and pinnacle,
And pulled down its masonry
Man finds its fixed foundation stones
Are laid deeper than the sea.

Thus mountains can be measured
Not by altitude of rime
Upon their brows, altho their heights
Are immeasureably sublime;

By width, or length, or largess
Which each scatters with its hands
To leave its deep foundation stones
Yet untold on which it stands.

Aye, much goes into mountains
Which eye neither may, nor can
Discern thro vision. Which is true
Of his manhood in the man!

Now, what constitutes a Statehood?
—Which, of the buildings of his day
Was the first one to be edified
And Man's last to pass away.

Is Statehood merely state-craft,
Or its constitution writ
But for convenience, or the times,
And to but occasion fit?

Mere state-craft may be fashioned
But to fitness of the day,
And worn at will, changed, laid aside,
But can Statehood? Aye, or nay?

What goes to make a Century,
Which few human lives may scan,
Or the cycle of an hundred years
In relationship to man?

A century of the heavens,
Or an hundred years of earth?
One, the circuit of a planet, one,
But a single oaktree's growth;

An hundred years of labor,
Or a century of thought?
One, the rounding of a minster's dome,
One, false reasoning come to nought.

While an hundred years of manhood
Stands beyond all reach of time,
Yet to live within Eternity
Immeasurably sublime!

Of its hundred years of Statehood,
My Country, can'st thou say
How thy century has met its past,
Or will meet the Coming Day?

The century most potent
In its accomplished worth
Of all which have preceded it
In the annals of the earth;

Nay, of Time's coming centuries,
As his vision may forescan,
None coming yet will equal it
In predominance of Man;

Betwixt the Poles who dominates
All the seas, the earth, the air
And underworld; whose prowess leaves
Him no further worlds to dare,—

What tribute hast thou rendered?
What wisdom have you learned?
What work has thou performed for it?
And what wages from it earned?

An hundred years of Statehood
Is a long, long time indeed,
Then hold up thy front, my Country,
That the Coming Day may read

What a century of Statehood
Hath writ thereon, as lines
Of deep thought on the faces drawn
Of our Fathers whose designs

Planned for thy future Statehood
Which thro all time must be
As something to be reckoned with.
What of thy first century

Now passed as thou wast building
On the most far-reaching plan
Which ever promised government,
With his freedom, for free man?

Our Fathers laid foundations
For upbuilding to your hand;
Upon which hast thou edified
Thy great edifice to stand

And tell the coming centuries
Of how masterly you wrought?
In which, doth each stone body forth
Some great principle, or thought;

Or inculcate some lesson,
Or instil some lasting truth,
Or some idea incorporate,
Or mark manhood in our youth?

For, hark ye! When foundations
By our Fathers were first laid
State-craftsmen of the Old World sneered
When they said our Sires had weighed

Without stamped weights, and measured
But with standards all untrue,
While experience would disprove their work!
Have we built with such in view?

Deep down they digged to found on rock,
And four-fronted, staunch, to square
With North, and South, with East and West;
And, pray, did'st thou oft compare

Each angle with Truth's Pole-star
That the needle should deflect
No whit to either right or left
That fixed righteousness detect

No trend toward indirection,
And no warp, or leaning to;
Plumbed by Law's level have you built
After-superstructure true?

Could we but say our house was planned,
As by freeman, for men free;
Alas! we cannot, and say truth,
When our shield of liberty

Failed to enshield; false-blazoned,
Which all time may not efface,
For freedom while we edified
Did we not enslave a race

Unto our great shamefacedness?
Hence, let us take good heed,
My Countryman, that no more slaves
We of any race do breed,

Or be bred beneath our roof-tree,
For, with but one bended knee,
Brow bent, arm bound we in-so-far
Needs must fail of liberty.

One hundred years of building
All along the World's highway
O'er which its travel needs must trend
To the Westward, we today

Would loose the Planet's waters
To the Orient that they flow
No more obstructed on their course;
Thus, responsible, we owe

It to the coming centuries
That this channel, sea to sea,
Can but be plowed by friendly keels;
And responsibility,

Far more, when we indoctrinate
That no flag shall be unfurled,
Nor acts to undemocratise
Neighboring Statehoods by the World.

Our constituted edifice
Was at first God-planned we prate.
If so, make we expense conform
With His sum of estimate?

Nought underdone, or overdrawn,
And comply in each respect
To what is specified in terms
By His writ, our architect,

To-wit: three master-builders,
While the one may authorize,
And the one its plans do execute,
While the one shall supervise.

And as we thus co-equally
State-construction delegate,
That neither does infringe, do we
In strict righteousness equate,

With no equivocation, that
While the one shall not exceed
His limit of fixed powers prescribed
Do we yield them each, indeed,

Full measure of prerogative
As to hold the one in three
As three in one, to thus subserve
Our triune democracy?

Nor rest with delegation
Of our powers; but do we scan,
With care, material and craft
Holds specifically to plan,

That our walls prove self-sustaining;
And coordinate in weight,
And equal tensile strain to bear,
Which tests freedom of the State!

And fix thro nice adjustments
The full liberties of each,
That weakness fails not of its own,
Nor that strength should overreach

Each pillar's pedestal so fixed
As to stand on solid rock
That when the Nation suffers jar
Each integral State feels shock?

The Old World sneered: "Your Fathers
Built far better than they knew,
With the favoring stars above them, but
Shall their great luck fall to you?"

Can we reply: "Our Statehood
Hopeth nought from lucky star.
No more it fears that Fortune's frown
Can democracy debar."

Or, claim for our Republic
No whit more, or yet take less
Than equal rights for all mankind
Under rule of righteousness?

While the Globe we all but quarter
In our eminent domain:
Whose Hemisphere for liberty
As a world-power we maintain.

Let us not vaunt our greatness,
Or yet boast our right-of-way
O'er which the Nations needs must pass
While they tribute to us pay,

But cause them to pay tribute,
And exact it, less by might
Of our material greatness, more,
By imperial sense of right.

Last, let our Lamp of Liberty
We have lit to light the sea
Enlighten freemen, and not glare
With a freedom but half free.

While finished the first century
Of our statehood on the plan
Our Fathers formulated as
A republic, yet we can

Hark back full five and twenty.
For we are of ancient breed
And lineage: what we have grown
Has all blossomed from the seed

Clasped in no dead, dried mummy's hand
For all these past centuries: nay,
Our Statehood's life from freemen sprang,
Whose great workmanship alway

Endurance hath as their seven hills:
While the manhood which they made
Their cornerstone of liberty
Has been ours: what they essayed

Has been our own experience:
More, each great and grand ideal
For which they strove has in our day
Been held sacrosanctly real.

Rome's were our fathers, we their heirs;
Rome's failings have been ours,
Achievements, and besetments, too,
With Rome's most transcendent powers:

With line and lineage, most our laws
From Rome's legal loins have sprung,
Whose form and phraseology
Have found utterance in Rome's tongue.

In vain to say analogies
In all statehoods does not hold;
In vain to say the new is not,
In essentials, as the old;

So, vain to say that trunk and bough
Of the root is not one strain,
As bud and blossom is not one
With the fruitage, is in vain;

Or that the human family,
With its many branches, can,
With common root, bear other fruit
Than the creature known as man;

Whose instincts, and inherencies,
And whose institutions plead,
At Manhood's bar, Life's common law.
Thus do statehoods each precede,

While States do follow precedent,
So may each of them discern,
Thro like analogies, and must
Each one its own lesson learn.

And thus with centuries. May God grant
With our own first century passed,
That its trend be not analogous
To Rome's great Republic's last!

BOOK I

Chapter I

Six hundred years of statehood,
With a century of world-sway,
When Sovereign Rome throned on seven hills
Now awaits the Coming Day,

Approaching, to claim audience;
Whose rich stately equipage,
With splendor of the Orient,
Well befits his embassage.

Preceded by outriders clad
In white garments: from whose spears,
Borne slantwise, thro her Eastern Gate
Bright translucent gold appears

Above their iridescent plumes
Of gilt gossamer impearled
Which floats the air like thistle-down,
Beneath silken sheen unfurled

Of purple banners, azure tinged.
Thus resplendent in array
How great beyond compare must be
The ambassadorial Day!

With such credentials as he bears,
With such offerings as he brings,
With such fealty as he proffers Rome,
Thro three hundred purpled kings,

Who rules queen-empress of the World,
Tho not sitting on a throne,
Nor sceptred, who reigns crownless, yet
With all-sovereignty her own.

With whom the Coming Day would treat
As in reciprocity.
Thus, with stately service which attends
His imperial embassy,

And endowed with such prerogative,
Then, without saying, must
This ambassador's great master be
Most imperially august.

Who treats above co-equal powers
For in empire supreme
The rule of Rome with his compared
Is as sand-grain in the stream

Of Time's onflowing current, which
Turns its facet to the sun,
Reflecting but one single ray
When its present hour has run

Into Life's past. While Future's sway
Is conterminous in scope
With the marches of Rome's hither fears
And her far frontiers of hope;

From which extending thitherward
Unto Time's remotest bounds
Where the great Sea of Illimitude
Eternally resounds

To surge of its tumultuous waves
Of vain questionings which mock
His finite mind, whose turbulence
There fall breaking on the rock

Of Man's crass ignorance! Thus the Day
Who, preceded with such state,
Should be followed by such great events
Upon sovereign Rome shall wait

His audience at her Senate doors
Where for six past centuries
She has received, to send with terms
Full so many embassies.

While ambassadors from Court to Court
By strict rule of precedent,
And immemorial usage, bear
Their great weight of argument

With nice adjustment unto state;
Hence so much pomp and equipage
Attending mien and character
Must as consequence presage

Grave and momentous issues. Yet,
Till today, had never come
An embassy with greater powers
To imperial Court of Rome.

Nor ever held Rome greater sway;
Nay, in vain were it to scan
The annals of the World's wide past,
Written in the mind of Man,

For precedent to Roman rule;
Nor yet unto this hour
Had more portentious issues hung
On predominance of power.

Six hundred years of statehood,
With a century of world-sway
When Rome would from her seven hills
Now treat with the Coming Day,

To smile on gifts he proffered her,
Or to frown on offered threat
While listening to his stern demands;
For Rome, hitherto, had met

Unpreparedly no Coming Day,
But with imperious grace
Did mediate, or with each treat
In succession face to face

On current questions. How she fared
With each one who went his way,
To give place to another one,
Let her answering annals say

From old traditions handed down
By the father to the son,
But from this on tradition ends
And her history has begun.

Rome's century past had all but fixed
Most her conquests into rule;
Where Carthage was is fallow ground;
Conquered Greece is teaching school;

The Macedonian phalanx meets
Roman legions but once more;
Between the Tiber and the Nile
There but hangs an half-hinged door;

The last great Scipio has brot
From Numantia, keys of Spain—
Which Rome in great exultancy,
Lacking glory, does retain—

Etruria's twelve republics
Are as cities of the dead;
While Umbria's fair vineyards lie
All but trampled under tread

Of horned cattle; Samnium sits
Cursing Rome by the new graves
Of her mighty dead; Campania breeds
But to pestilence; while slaves

The rights of freemen now usurp
As their bondmen, still they come,
Ten thousand landed in one day,
For the labor marts of Rome,

Where countless prows her water plow
With the canvas never furled,
For corn on which thro Tiber's mouths
Rome, while fattening, feeds the world.

When, thro the gateways of the East,
Most resplendent in array,
Janus, High Chamberlain of Rome,
Ushers in the Coming Day

To treat on questions that he was
By his master bidden ask,
The August Future, and in truth
Was a more momentous task

Never laid upon embassador ;
As, with lapsed treaties which forewent,
This following, after should be held
As a world-wide precedent

For future Statehoods. New, yet old,
They called "Gracchian" and while we
Hold his idea indoctrinate
Do now call "State Sovereignty."

Aye, not before, and rarely since
Have like problems which involved
The times, with its democracies,
Proven harder to be solved.

And never yet was present State
By its future so put to
For guarantee, or future asked
By its present to construe

Its purposes, with pledges made,
That the times could not gainsay,
As Rome now of this envoy asked,
Or was asked by Coming Day.

Not yet since State was given voice
To put question, or reply,
Times regulate, terms formulate,
Doubt assert, or faith deny

Was one so hearkened to as Rome
And whose phrases, nay, each word,
Inscribed or spoken, from this on
Should be ever read, or heard

As this language of world-utterance;
Realmed in Letters, Law and Art,
Theology, Diplomacy,
Or that could so well impart

To nice expression, terse, exact,
Be it written, said or sung,
As henceforth should at least find root
In Rome's lasting Latin tongue.

And last. These high contracting powers
Which are now about to meet
In diplomatic conference,
To on pending issues treat,

Shall not confer in cabinet
Or by whisperings in the ear;
For tradition passed, now history comes
To record what all may hear.

Six hundred years of statehood,
With a century of world-sway,
When we await both his demands,
And Rome's pledge to Coming Day.

Chapter II.

Ere his plowshare yet had furrowed
The still placid face of Earth;
Ere sore travail pangs of labor had
To his arts yet given birth;

Ere his utterance yet knew Letters;
Ere his Commerce showed emprise;
Ere Man's questionings of Science yet
Had been answered by the skies;

In a valley of the Appenines
Now two dappled kittens played
In the sunshine with the shadows which
There the straight-branched beechtrees made,

To slip blinking from dark caverns
Into light, as each one crept
So soft-footed, when in playfulness
Then the one to other leapt

With sparkling eyes, when, closing
In a firm and fast embrace
Till parted by obstruction, thence
To run onward in a race,

As they tumbled down declivities,
Or swept purring thro tall grass,
Weaving in and out the willows like
Silvery thread of molten glass;

As no longer now two kittens
And twain further, but as one
Great tawny lion's lengthened flanks
Which lay stretched in noontide sun.

Aye, they knew it as a lion's
When the dalesmen heard its roar,
Ere the lightnings lit the Umbrians
Whence fierce torrents downward pour;

For nought but a mountain lion
Could so scare the bleating flock,
And the lowing herds thus terrify,
And the timorous herdsmen mock

In sheer wantonness. O Tiber!
Thus insatiate is thy flood,
And insensate too, when soon to be
Deep incarnadined with blood;

Most insatiate of streams flowing
In thy greed to grasping sea,
And insensate, as thou can't not feel
For the fullness given thee.

When befronting Rome thy turbidness
Is but scarce three fathoms deep,
Yet all rivers' depths with thine compared
No such valued treasures keep!

Now of Rome I ask thee, Tiber,
Say then what thou dost enfold
In thine embosomed secretness
That she hath left all untold

Saving but to thee, with frankness
Come, then, truly answer me
Now of this her latest, and as well
Of Rome's greatest century;

For unto it shall come happenings
That have never gone before,
While large events, with world-intents
With it wait beside thy door.

First, Has manhood reached the limits
Of its manfulness?—Some say
As hath Greece in wisdom and in art
So has Rome in manhood—pray,

Can man's moral bone and sinew
Yet sustain but so much weight?
Are there limits to self-government,
And set boundaries of State,

Within which thrives democracy
While beyond them—Do I go
Far beyond thy depths, O Tiber? Aye,
For this last thou dost not know!

Still thou hast in store much knowledge,
For Rome never budded thought,
That should bloom with speech, and fruit to act
But she first unto thee brot;

For Rome holds thee as paternal,
Of her offspring brot to birth
Most have learned speech at Tiber's knee,
Where beside, in childish mirth,

They sedately did play Statehood,
And built forums in thy sand
While child-tribunes faced boy-senators
Whom they dared not to withstand;

And where, too, in tiny temples
Brothers votive offerings made,
And to household gods, formed of thy clay,
Sisters reverently prayed.

Do Rome's children yet show piety,
And unto Penate bow,
As to gods of home and family,
Or but worship mammon now?

When thy manful, toddling Romanlings
Saw Lucretia's blighted home
Then fast running at their fathers' heels,
They helped stone the kings from Rome.

Now in lieu of lustful kingship,
Which then proved the Tarquins base
With a low licentious viciousness,
Rules sweet virtue in its place?

Rome enjoys a large prosperity,
And for which she does avow
Unto her gods great gratitude,
While she richly doth endow

For them each rare chiseled temples,
With rich palaces for priests;
While men whose swords carved prosperously
Fare they now as well as beasts?

Should I ask Rome for truth-pleading
To all these indictments she
Would, demurring, lie, or all deny,
While but silence is thy plea,

As thy waves lap without answer.
Insensate beast thou art;
And insatiate, while more grasping, less
Of thy story to impart!

Rome used call thee, "Father Tiber"
When she worshipped thee when thou
Befathering, fed, befriended her,
While she needs must feed thee now

As an hungry beast which ravens
Upon her own flesh and blood,
Where her best bone and sinew soon
Will but feed thy fish in mud!

True, while from thy loins, O Tiber,
Did'st thou her first procreate;
Yet, as true, Rome hath corrupted thee
All in common with her State,

As, beast-like, she tears the manhood
Of her best-born limb from limb,
While, reverting to the wolf she sucked,
She loud howls, "Ad Tiberim!"

Chapter III.

What see'st thou, Man-among-the-tombs,
Who hold'st thy present way
Thro these dead cities of the past;
What do their ruins say

With that hushed voice that speaks to thee?
Tho listenest as thine ear
Would catch some whispered message. Pray,
What is it thou dost hear

Above the sigh of mourning winds
Which yesterday gave breath
To wakeful folk whose sleep today
Is the somnolence of death?

This is the morning of thy youth,
Life's sun is yet scarce high.
Then why pace as in eventide
With a dropped averted eye?

Approaching thee I marked thy mien
Of manfulness and might,
Erectness, and of martial tread,
But to note thy downcast sight.

Too, harnessed as a soldier. Say,
Why whither hast thou come?
And by thy carriage, and short sword—
Dost thou not wield it for Rome?

And yet thou hast not Roman face;
Mayhap, some alien strain
Flows in thy blood. Etrurian?
As the cattle on this plain.

Primevally of Tuscan breed,
With lowbrowed herdsmen slaves—
Both Rome's, not Roman—while the first
Do now graze thy Fathers' graves,

The second rob, to lodge like beasts—
Perchance, this is what stirs
Thy mind to contemplation now?
In Etrurian sepulchres.

Yet nought has living Rome to do
With cities of the dead,
Etruria looks backward, while
Sees far-sighted Rome ahead.

Does not thy legion wait for thee
Away in further Spain
Where brave Numantia, now besieged
Wars with mighty Rome in vain?

Aye, vain, beleaguered city, vain!
No help will to thee come;
When thou shalt fall, as fall thou must,
The Great Sea is girt by Rome.

Why listenest thou among these tombs
As living century
Can hear those dead? Nay, voice it thou
With an "Ave Domine"!

Hail Rome as master of the world;
When, should'st thou thy voice thus school
To adulation, then for hire
Shalt thou yet share Roman Rule.

Among those tombs still listening, much
Distraught, as if the dead
Could speak to living ears! Nay, nay,
Best thou hark to Rome, instead,

Whose voice is that of promise. More,
Thy promise she will hear,—
Then loud cry, "Ave Roma!" when
Thou shalt have her listening ear.

For hearing ear means to youth most,—
When age e'en listeneth
To adulation. But small heed
Gives immortal Rome to death!

Twelve cities of Etruria once
Brot Rome's lone one to knee
In supplication for its life.
Now, Etruria, where is she?

Prone at Rome's knees with most the world!
Then wilt thou presume to teach
A present lesson from her past?
Nay, let owls their wisdom screech,

While ravens croak their omens, but
It more comports thy youth
To wisely heed self-interest,
And withhold from Rome thy truth

Till age have made thee circumspect,
Thro ringing of thine eyes;
While experience thy tongue doth slow
But to speak what seemeth wise.

Yet wiser, with thy sentiment,
To embody in some lay
Thy wisdom for the world wise sing
Of Democracies, nor say!

When, Rome will her approval nod
If, incorporate in song,
Some concrete virtue thou dost praise
And rebuke but abstract wrong!

Hast heard of Marcus Manlius
Who saved Rome but to mock
Her Senate and her Tribune;
And of that Tarpeian Rock,

Where his split, and Most Rome's reforms?
Then parrot this refrain,
"Republics ever right themselves."
Upon which dwell long, tho vain

To sing just how, more than with nice
Abstractions—when she may
Crown thee her laureate, whilst thou
To great Rome hast had thy say!

Sing, imitating Ennius,
That smooth time-serving Greek,
Who praised the first great Scipio,
Of the last then with laud speak,

Thy mighty kinsman. Praise his gifts,
God-given graces, times—
Praise anything, praise everything
Which alliteratively rhymes,

With fulsome, facile, fluent flow,
Teach thou thy tongue to praise
Whatever happens happily
With apt happiness of phrase!

Phrase Rome's "past manhood," "present state,"
Her "great futurity;"
Phrase her "world-power," "imperial sway,"
But, take heed lest thou see—

Phrase, too, her "honest Tribunate,"
Her "Senate's dignity,"
Her "God-writ Constitution" phrase,
Yet, take heed lest thou see—

Phrase "Free Republic," "Freeman's rights,"
Her last "great century,"
But what lies in Rome's sepulchers
Phrase, sing, nor even see!

Thou hast no voice for song! Have ear
Then for this classic lay—
That Rome has copied from the Greek—
Which she loves to sing today.

*In a valley of Gargaphia
Where the bare-armed vines embrace
The water-elms in wantonness,
When, aweary of the chase,*

*Came the chaste Diana with her nymphs
Their loveliness to lave,
By leafage hid from Phoebus' eyes,
In the cool insensate wave;*

*While the prattling streams with innocence
Run blindly down the dell
Where between the lilies blown, or born,
Scarce the difference can tell.*

*But, not so with amorous Actaeon
Who by day would furtively
Dare a beauty that Endymion
But by moonlight was let see.*

*While, beastlike, in the reeds he crouched
At his most unlawful feast
Diana's quick transforming eye
Fell on him. When, made beast,*

*Hot Actaeon from his covert springs;
Who, bounding off a stag,
Is now pursued by his own pack
Whence at his door they drag*

*Their antlered master to the ground
But to lap his blood. Nor less
Shall that man suffer from his own
Who peers on Rome's nakedness!*

Chapter IV.

Man worshipped better than he knew
When by piety endued
Each act of providence he held
Of an all-wise Fatherhood;

Nor lacked he reverence to hold
That his being and his birth,
Divinely imaged, breathed upon,
Was from womb of Mother Earth,

Who nursed him at her swelling paps,
With vitality so rife,
In common with both plant and beast
One with Brotherhood of Life;

And wiser than he wot was Man
When by symbol and by sign
All her creation he saw good,
And held Nature's work divine;

When, Godhead shouldered on the son,
Fatherhood would imitate
And by the Brotherhood of Man
He did first create the State.

In sequence of the ages passed
There has scarcely lived a folk
To breed a State's endurance, but
Over-shadowed by an oak.

Some virile thought conception had
Of fixed principle, forsooth,
Which quickened, when, its time being full,
Came to birth a living truth

Thro such sore travail, labor pangs,
That the trembling Earth did quake,
While portents filled the Skies; or else
With Man's liberties at stake,

Minerva-like, Truth then sprang forth
War-empanoplied, and when,
Because of dragons' teeth besown
By oppression sprang armed men;

Or, Truth may be to being brot
In the blushes of the morn
When at the dawn of some New Day
But a frail man-child is born

Inanimate, hardly viable
And whose veriest gasp of breath
Asks, is he coming in with Life,
Or yet going out with Death?

For, born as maybe, none can foreknow
From nativity, forsooth,
Forecast his future to foretell,
Or, Foreshadowing, foresee Truth!

And thus with Statehood. Which comes less
Of mere statecraft to be wrought
Thro working at, and much less planned
By a reasoning Mind with Thought;

More, as o'ershadowing concept when
Lowered man seeks something higher,
With his loins of virile manhood keen,
All a-quiver with desire

Of aspiration to beget,—
It was more the Sabine rape
Than plow of Father Romulus
That the ends of Rome did shape—

Or a Statehood to incorporate
With a body that can feel,
Expand and grow, enlarging, learn;
And, too, for its commonweal

Interdependent members, head,
No more than hand and heart;
And, wherewithal, much better, and
A full further life impart.

When thus with Freedom to State wed
Then Sense to Soul's embrace
Should warmly thrill, while motive mean
Must with blush suffuse the face

As something base and ill-begot,
When, no matter what its name,
Kingdom, Empire, Republic, it
Must needs wear the front of shame!

So, vain to call live Statehood writ,
Tho the pen-craft be sublime,
Or pattern fashioned from the draft
With the wisdom of all time;

When, tho cast, or forged from tested steel;
Comes a quick cyclonic strain
When castings break, or forgings bend
But to prove pen-draftings vain!

Still, may not State be edified
Upon others civic plan?
Aye, but as reproduction may
Reproduce the like in man!

The Assyrians, and the Persians, and
The Egyptians built of clay
Whose manhood insignificant
As their walls have passed away,

Save on the Oxus, Indus, Nile
Their past dynasties have built
Vast temples, or writ monuments,
Both cemented with blood-guilt,

With the Sphinx as State-interpreter,
Which, tho listening, cannot say
Of purpose, or yet promise make
To the Future's Coming Day!

Cathay and Ind small fibre have,
But mere bamboo-folk who breed
In man's similitude thro lust,
But to war and famine feed.

Still, if Statehood needs should pattern have,
Or each State must be designed
On others, in the sturdy oak
Let it type and symbol find;

To first mark its upspringing blade,
When, dig down and number roots,
Look where trunk seeks for sustenance,
Which, then climb and number shoots,

Interdependent root with branch,
When, cut off the one below,
In that which corresponds above
Then some hurt, needs be, must show.

Be bark abrased, or branch be lopped
Then may trunk become unsound,
Altho, perhaps, in some degree
Time may yet have healed the wound.

Last, watch for fungus at the root;
And for parasites which feed
Upon its substance; for dry-rot
To learn whence it doth proceed.

And yet herein should all prove sound
Both the branch, and trunk, and root,
With fibre proved, all goes for nought
Lacks it reproducing fruit

To feed Life's hungry; and, far more,
When time counts it with the passed
May future, maybe better, trees
Then be nourished by the last!

As grows the oak tree, so the State,
And that which is true of one
Must in the other stand for truth.
While the each its course must run

In natural order, both have life,
And have either sense to feel;
While neither can show thriftiness
That doth inner hurt conceal.

But each alike must pass! Aye, true,
And yet since its growth began
The strain of oak has never passed,
Or his manhood out of Man;

Which had, each State may name itself,
Or its rulers, and with free,
Untrammelled manhood, in-so-far
Is it a democracy,

Which lacking, by whatever name
He may Statehood designate,
Republic, Kingdom, Empire each
In-as-much falls short of State!

Chapter V.

Upon the slopes of Algidus,
In Latium, there stood
An human forest of oak trees,
In embattled brotherhood,

Of such tough and sinewy fibre that
To incorporate this strain,
Or hew it down, Rome oft had sent
Her stout axemen thence in vain,

For its grittiness so turned her steel,
That when this last legion crossed
Its borders, stout beleaguerment
Held it but as good as lost.

When Rome would reinforcement send.
“Nay! these ill-times need sturdier stroke
Than lies within a Consul’s arm,
Match their good with better oak.”

A Tribune of the people said,
When now the Senate sent
To fetch such fibre;—for then Rome
Was eventful to event,

Ever proved eventual to her ends;
And whose Senate always knew,
With good stuff insufficient, where
That a something better grew.

When now five of its purple came—
Where in solitary pride
A grim, gnarled, knotted oaktree stood
In an half-plowed field beside

A wattled cottage, where within
There dwelt an whitehaired one
Who had followed into banishment
His proud patrician son

Who had spoken plebeian Tribune ill;
For, Mother Nature harshly hung—
Or, whose war-bred father had not schooled
Him to wag a civil tongue.

Here the Senators, this old man found,
In but tunic, at his plow.
Who, as with hairy arm he wiped
The round sweat beads from his brow—

Beside his arm none mightier;
Or than that plowed brow no field
Had been more furrowed with deep thought,
And had brot the State more yield—

“How fares it now with Rome?” he asked.
When, if hearing, none replied.
Then, as a blast roars thro the wood,
He sent forth his voice and cried;

“Bring my senatorial toga, Wife!”
When thus clad he sneered, “What now?”
“The Senate clothes you with all-power.”
So, Rome’s Dictator left his plow

To lead her legions. One night’s march,
When another morning’s sun
Saw beleaguerers all beleaguered. Thus
Had the Aequan Wood been won

For Roman timber; on whose cliffs
Did Rome’s eagles, henceforth, breed
A valor equal to her own.
Altho vanquished, unsubdued

A Gracchus now the triumph graced
Of a Cincinnatus. Brave
As Rome’s bravest foes, yet so true
As the fealty which he gave

Her Commonweal. Thus alien oak
In Rome’s native soil took root,
From which in coming centuries
There sprang many a virile shoot.

And thus, from then to now, all great
Republics of the free,
Thro intergrowing strain with grain;
Fresh new fibre in old tree,

A shoot from here, a graft from there,
Root here, and there a seed,
An idea past, or thought forecast;—
In democracies do breed

Unto one face, and single front;
Tho of divers tongues, maybe,
Yet with a common thought to voice
But the speech of Liberty;

As one of many, yet all one
To plow, plant, and reap free field,
And have to feed less favored ones
With the boon of Freedom's yield.

Aye, so today as it was when
By far Tiber took firm root
On native soil a foreign oak
To bud, blossom, and bear fruit

For Rome's Republic. Whence, with time,
There grew another tree,
Of Etrurian stock a Gracchian trunk
Of such vital symmetry,

And righteous growth its scions gave
One Censor uprightness,
Two triumphs to one Consul, and
Made a Praetor famed no less;

Save but Dictator, there was nought
Which the purple could bestow,
Or honor that could grace good name—
And yet all which fell below

A moral greatness no less high
In old Roman rectitude,
Or in justice to her enemies,
Than Sempronius Gracchus stood.

To whom Cornelia twelve times bore,
Where she so enthroned her home,
To wear the crown of Motherhood
As the queenliest dame in Rome;

Who refused to share the diadem
Of the Nile, on Egypt's throne,
For the Tiber's lonely widowhood
With crown-jewels all her own.

While Cleopatra pearls dissolved
In lust, Rome's uncrowned queen,
Cornelia, hers gave to the State.
Thus does Woman choose between!

Virginia, and Lucretia, and
Cornelia, these three—
Maid, wife and mother—who have stood,
To e'er stand, most womanly

As three women of three periods,
To each one so play her part
In the Sovereignty of Womanhood
As to win its broken heart!

Chapter VI.

When, at the hands of wanton Waste
The breast of Mother Earth
Of her greeneries had been disrobed;
Where the nurselings of her birth

At its full paps once suckled when
Their finger tips felt throb
Of the great warm heart which pulsed beneath;
Now, but sigh, with muffled sob

Is breathed upon the restless breeze;
When from the staring eye
Of a brazen sun within she shrinks,
While her once full fountains dry

Thro burning shame, whose pallid cheeks,
Having lost their blushing bloom,
Tell the loss of happy motherhood,
And an empty barren womb;

Who, prone, mourns all disconsolate
With her bearing passed, where vine
Erst clusters bore above her door
Droops but cyprus, and lone pine!

Yet Rome stood shameless when her oaks
Were gone which had renowned
Her great ones, and from which her least
For their valorous deeds were crowned.

Gone! glorious days of oak-wreathed hills
When there were but degrees
Of bravery and valor, where
Highest crowns hung on low trees.

Gone! glorious days when manhood might
Be worn upon the brow,
When Place gave way to Principle,
And mere Wealth to Worth must bow.

Gone! glorious days when sentiment,
As ruddy moral health
Was catching and infectious. Gone
With the coming in of wealth!

Passed, most, those men of fibre
By their compeers surnamed, “great”,
Beams of live oak that buttressed, while
They upheld the roof of State.

Passed, too, most Rome’s large Senators
Who scorned to do small thing,
Of whose three hundred pick blindfold
When the touch must feel a king.

Passed, most patrician Consuls
Whose pride proved but the thorn
That pricked with obligation on
To nobility inborn;

Passed, stalwart plebeian Tribunes
Rare men of common birth
Who stood for common brotherhood
In a Commonweal of Worth.

All passed with old traditions
That in sturdier days obtained
Which as rough bark of oak-trunk, told
Of their fibrous truth ingrained.

Nor yet came lack of leaders
For her legions, men whose itch
Was but to scratch barbarian dung
That, befouling, made them rich!

Nor yet were lack of leaders
In her Senate, or degrees
Of leadership, Rome yet was led,
And no more was lack of trees

Which fruited crowns, no lack at all
Where they flourished now apace
In curves, and rings, and circles which
Crowned Venality with place.

Trees of soft woods, or spurious-oak
With a redundant shoot
Of clientage, which noxious flowered
And bore a specious fruit

That distilled a fierce intoxicant
Which mounting to the brain
Begat an hankering lust to get,
Without scruple, power with gain.

Hardwoods always grow very slow;
While these sprang in a night,
Like toadstools from corruption rank,
But to seed as poisonous blight.

Nor lacked Rome for tradition's pride
That did prate of, "Self-made men,"
As if manhood could be self-begot!
But not so old Rome's, for when

Large manhood was but lowly born,
And which showed a sturdy grain,
Tradition held its forebears must
Be exceptional in strain.

From earliest days where highways crossed
Great Jovian live oaks stood,
Centurians of passed centuries,
Of tough, gnarled war-knotted wood,

Held sacred, as fixed guide-posts. Gone!
And fresh-planted trees now grew
Beside new ways, but thro old roads,
To mark some short avenue

To Place and Power; right shapely trees
Which the changing times bepruned
To an harmonious symmetry,
As, like instruments attuned

To lead the chorus, that it strike
No harsh discordant notes;
So today as new Rome's senators
Were now wont to cast their votes

With little discord, as lock-step
They kept with enterprise,
While legislation kept in touch
Thro the closing of its eyes.

Unanimous to whisperings,
Where silent glance spoke more,
To nod assenting, than harsh winds
Which had roared cropped oaks of yore.

With uncouth phrase now obsolete
When ear could hear the creak
Of ungreased senatorial jaws
Or, when ambassadors used speak

Archaic parable to sneers
Abroad, but coming home
Their meaning sped on eagles' wings
With the ultimate of Rome!

Now, behind closed doors they treated where
A negotiation meant
One temple, and nine villas come
And without a legion sent!

Which true, what good of oak in Rome,
Or need to play the part
Of patriot with patriotism
But a matter of mere mart?

Oak timber works ill to make shelves
For merchandising stuff,
Nor lends itself to tooling, tho
To helve war-tools not too tough!

Aye, Rome as a wealthy merchant
Had need for salesmen more
Than statesmen, with her Capitol
But a vast department store

Where three hundred merchant princes
But betagged the price of things
Where policies were once prescribed
By as many purpled kings.

Where civic ills were doctored
By the dosing of a craw
With chicanery, and dead fowls passed
A live fundamental law;

Where, too, most Roman rights were passed—
Where smoke o'er homesteads curled
From former hearthstones, now estates,
Where these buyers of the world

Built stately villas where they housed
All that grasping wealth could wish.
Where toiling countrymen raised corn
Lazy senators bred fish

In marble fishponds; where the gods
Once yield to labor gave
Sufficient for its need, now Wealth
Most of labor did enslave.

While Lares and Penates still
Were worshipped in the home
Of poor men, most the rich man's faith
In his gods was gone at Rome.

Save but to serve as notaries
To swear by, or attain
A pious name by trooping them
As poor clients in his train.

And while rich temples were endowed
By Wealth, each one was built,
Commemorating some good grace,
But with proceeds of its guilt!

With last of life, and first of death
And dissolution, e'er
Decay, risus sardonicus,
Or the demoniac sneer,

Sits on Man's front to set Death's mark
Of ownership; so now
That dire, and devilish sneering grin
Fell on hers to but avow

Gone living faith in God, and man
And in herself, which fate
Tho sad in self, sadder in man
Is the saddest of a State!

And so she sneered now at her gods,
At virtue, worst, at faith
In her Republic now Rome sneered,
Whose corruption sneered at Death!

Gone! oaktrunks which uppillared erst
The rooftrees of the State,
With oak beams which engirded, and
Proved for centuries adequate

To all Rome's need for Statehood, tho
Which often felt the strain
Of ill-advised state-craft, when
Loud thunderings amain

From all four quarters of the World.
Yet, despite whose oft defeat
When with humiliation she
Sometimes sadly went to meet

Her children armed in faction; still,
Was this offspring not her own?
And when by voice of Tribune were
All their grievances made known.

Were they ere denied an hearing? Nay!
More, whatever tempest broke
On her rough-hewed Constitution, yet
Stood it not for rugged oak?

Yes! Tho rudest constitution which
A great State yet had known;
Or which State's yet had ere compared
With Rome's tensile fibre shown?

Gone! Like Tiber's old Sublician bridge
It was oaken, steadfast, true,
From which no citizen dared take,
And no Roman add thereto!



BOOK II.

Chapter I.

As in uplands of the Umbrians
Anear its fountain head,
While rejoicing in a newborn strength,
And by influent streamlets fed.

Then full easy for young Tiber
Thro its inherent force
To sweep aside, or flow around
All that hinders its free course.

While in flat Campanian lowlands,
With nought impeding flow,
And when shallowed thro large widening,
It is like to sluggish grow.

So, high-born in Mounts of Manhood,
To great aspirations bred,
With fixed family traditions
Both to channel and give head.

It does seem now to the eager
Onflowing Stream of Youth
Not difficult to from its way
Sweep all obstacles of Truth.

But to find when Life enwidens,
With new motives intermixed,
And old usage overlapping use,
With sophistic falsehood fixed

To conventional conservatism;
Then, with its energies unfed,
Youth's enthusiasm weakens while
Truth's endeavor seems as dead.

Nor less—with Statehood rising
In Life's uplands of the Right
What thwarts free course is swept aside
Thro impetuous force of might,

But to find, as all States yet have found,
Thro ill influence waxing strong,
Hard to withstay its ebbing flow
In lax lowlands of the Wrong!

As taught Tiber, so Tiberius,
His youthful namesake, learned
In the war with Spain, whose valorous deeds,
With just dealings, for him earned

Both respect of friends and foemen,
That his Father's righteous fame
Had paved the way to influence
Thro sheer force of his good name.

In its origin not Roman,
Yet despite its alien birth
Rome in her treasury of names
Held scarce one of greater worth.

Tho from Latian loins sprang Gracchus,
Yet in Cornelia's womb
Life quickened, fed with Roman blood,
Whose illustrious Father's tomb

Held the ashes of brave Scipio
Africanus, surnamed "Great"
Whose warring done, slept peacefully
In aristocratic state.

When, with such brave antecedents,
And with manhood writ on brow;
To purple born, of knightly strain
What to hinder this staunch prow,

Then, beneath Right's flag of equity,
To set sail upon the main
Of Life's yet untroubled Sea to win,
And just Roman rights maintain?

Yet, withal, Tiberius Gracchus
From the war with Spain come home,
Was surprised to find, tho not dismayed,
That rich Plutocrats of Rome

Eyed him all askant; while Senators
Who had wealth amassed in trade
Thro license of conniving law,
For the most were now arrayed

Against him; yet the People
Who would labor but could find
No earnings; with old soldiers who
Had before this served behind

Him as captain, in privation,
Lacking homes, and corn and coats,
Save war-worn harness, gave to him
Roman confidence and votes

As their First Tribune; whose manhood,
And whose voice, gave in return
Both best endeavor and his means;
Yet to have what many earn

Who do will and work for justice
As their manhood says they must,
For all that service had and done
But the wages of distrust!

Nor was Gracchus first to venture
At the helm of State Reform,
For another had preceded him
But to tack in face of storm.

One Caius Lelius Sapiens,
For his wisdom surnamed, "wise,"
In that his prescience did forecast
Then, Rome's dark electric skies.

But yet was Gracchus witless
To foresee? He saw behind
In the wastes of lost Etruria
What the Coming Day should find,

And did, to Roman scandal;
Where the Manes of the Dead
Thence called to him; while living prayers
Upon Rome's dead walls he read

And on monuments petitions,
Which their writers dare not voice,
Lamenting hardships long endured
Who, of his utterance made choice;

Too, his teacher's precepts, Blossius,
With his mother's words, Nay, nay,
Small matter what he saw, he heard
Duty's call but to obey!

Yet, one's duty wears masks manifold,
While Ambition who may trust?
Well, what the odds so duty makes
Man ambitious to be just,

And serve well his generation,
And add lustre to the name
His Fathers gave him, and enrich
A most righteous family fame!

True—sailing, this young Captain
Made far less note of the skies
Than of his chart approved and planned
By old mariners as wise

As ever sailed a Ship of State;
When great Appius Claudius, and
The High Priest, Cassius, Mucius,
The Consul, stood on strand

To wish him Godspeed. So put forth
A first ship, but we scan
The World's horizon yet in vain
For the last named, "Rights of Man!"

Chapter II.

As First Tribune, Tiberius sought
To simply re-enact
The long lapsed old "Licinian Law"
Which gave from the public tract

A fixed leasehold to Citizens
For a low rent, of which
The poor man soon was dispossessed
By encroachments of the rich

Who took advantage of his needs,
Thro foreclosure, or his name,
With rights secured, to further land,
Illegally, make claim;

Whereon, by conquered slaves, they grazed
Their cattle; while, who fought
To gain both land and slaves, to want
And homelessness were brought,

Thro ancient law of license, which,
Old as the greed of Man,
Allows strength hold what it may get,
Yet to weakness what it can.

Against which one Licinius,
A plebeian Tribune, stood
For enactment of a law more just;
Who for his rectitude

Was then elected Consul; when,
To wealth and power once come,
He led in breaking his own law—
As he went the way of Rome—

To put in force that older law
Of casuistry which
Makes one most conscientious, poor,
But unconscionable, rich.

Or, while standing as a Tribune true,
Yet, to as Consul, falsely sit!
Still, Rome with laws for everything
Made them on occasion fit

Most any case; so she affixed,
As a mark of ill-repute,
The surname to Licinius
Of Stolo, (sucker-shoot).

Now while this ancient landlaw was
But in dead-letter writ
Its living, senseful spirit shook,
As with an ague fit,

Land-Senators; meanwhile it chilled
Their investments with mistrust
Thro its enforcement. Yet this law
Was most equitably just,

Or could be made so. Still, its scope
Of justice did reveal
Rome's vital unprotected point.
Like the great Achilles' heel,

So now was Rome's. Tho stout of heart,
And with heavy hand, wise head,
Her heel proved vulnerably weak
Thro its selfish trend and tread

Which none knew better than herself —
That before had trodden laws
To full behest, why not, again,
This one tramp down? Because

Behind bowshaft a right arm bent
Rome could buy, or break, nor bend;
And yet foredoomed, as Paris whom
The soothsayers did portend,

Thro his imprudence, dire effects,
When his pregnant mother dreamed
That her son would bear a lighted torch
Which to Troy's destruction gleamed.

So, when Mother Nature has for long
Been in a surly mood,
While pregnant with some dire event,
Life foresees vicissitude.

And no less sentience mark States
In crises which betray
What Seers of Statesmanship foresee,
Tho unable to foresay.

When, the very Times do legislate.
When, State debts must be paid;
When, Times for Seasons do not wait;
When foreclosures must be made

Thro Natural Law which operates
Insettiently. Thus Rome
Proved as such State, whose long arrears
Found her Reckoning Day had come

Less, with Her new Sempronian-more,
She upon herself did draw,
With increment, the justice of
The old lapsed Licinian Law,

Most natural, for maternal, which
Held each mother for her own
Both food and shelter must provide
Until self-supporting grown.

While Rome had bred to Pride, by Power,
Which is ever prone to thrust
Its hungry offspring to the wilds
Ill-begotten, as thro lust

Of conquest—to nurse wolves in hopes
That they would develop jaws
To rend her enemies; but worse,
Rome's now ravened on her laws

As whelps of Anarchy; when, worst,
Who now suckled these wolf-paps
With wolfish greed proved Senators
To in wolfishness relapse!

Ah! Life's fixed, Eternal Laws—
Of which Man so doth prate
With puny pratlings, ere man was,
Which his God did legislate,

As laws of living, have not changed,
Or ever will one whit,
For elements, plant, beast, and Man
Who doth yet presume to sit

In judgment, and ape-like, reform
As he would his human clod,
Or, relegislate, reregulate
These enactments of his God,

With which if he cannot conform,
To their constituted plan,
Life's Constitution still will hold
Tho it may not uphold Man!

Now Rome, whose wisdom mothered Law,
Seemed slow to comprehend
Wherein a lapse of justice would,
Thro ill-legislation end.

Yet her famed legal acumen
Should, with prescience, foresee
That heedless loins which lacked an head
Could but breed to Anarchy!

Who sober and in right mind saw;
But now, intoxicate,
Conquered thro lust of conquest, she
Could not justly legislate

Coherently, and wisely. Nay,
For great Wealth, her paramour
Who pandered to her wanton lusts,
Whom she dallied with, felt sure

The Times would give her time to all
Past obligations pay
The August Future on demand
Of his envoy, Coming Day.

Still, tho Rome was deeply in her cups
She was not drunk enough
But that she knew her sons were grained
Of inherent Roman stuff,

To whom in yielding this just law
Which gave the father land
To house and home his family;
That with this whereon to stand

As Roman Freeman, footed fast
On hearthstone of his home,
Here was a menace greater far
Than as yet had threatened Rome!

And yet Wealth was just drunk enough
To howl "Demagogue!" to drown
Men's prayers for right with maudlin speech
Of, "Imperialism!" "Crown!"

Yet when time comes for terms like these
In a great Republic, then
Democracy should hear it from
But the lips of sober men!

Chapter III.

When, with diplomatic precedent,
Now the Coming Day had laid
Before the Senators of Rome
Full credentials, and essayed

To treat with them in the behalf
Of the August Future, and
Exact redress for present wrongs;
Predicating his demand

On future guarantees, he met
Both evasion and delay,
With quibble as to vested rights;
Then, as he came in bright array

With crimson robes beclad, so passed
He thro gateways of the West;
Where, with glorious vestments doffed, he laid
With Placidity at rest;

When Hesperus rose, mute emblem of
Said saying, and deed done,
As the silent Hours now flitted by
In the darkness one by one.

Of high contracting parties Day
Was full satisfied to rest
Upon his mission well performed;
Meanwhile, Senators, oppressed,

Turned fevered pillows; while, proud Wealth
His obsequious clients fed
In luxury; while, wanton Lust
In mad dithyrambic tread

Danced unconcerned; while, Poverty,
With wakefulness, earth walked
To post her plaints upon Pride's tombs;
While, etherially, there stalked

The Manes of her mighty Dead,
Present spirits of past oak,
Unseen, yet seeing naked Rome
Passing underneath the yoke

Of Humiliation, erst beclothed
With such glories as made great;
While tongue says nought of what they thought
Of her present moral state,

Nor what they of her future feared,
For of this incorporate host
Not one was vocal, it was but
As a disembodied ghost.

So thus the passing Day now slept,
Nor had sought to reconcile
Past happenings with Rome's present state.
Wakeful ravens croaked meanwhile!

As the cock crew now the sleeper woke
With Earth's fledglings. When the sun,
Bright Phoebus, wheeled from Alban Hills
His accustomed course to run

In the Forum he saw Coming Day
Most benignant, with a smile
Serenely calm; when, from the brow
Of that time-worn beetling pile,

Fixed no less firm than Tarpeian Rock,
The grim Capitol cast down
From this bulwark of Rome's liberties
The dark shadow of a frown

In which the multitude now stood,
With expectance, which it wore
Reflected on its stolid front,
And behind it, as before

It stared with dread. Assembled
For a purpose, was it? Aye,—
Tho it appeared so purposeless!
As it here and there gave way,

As it never did war-harnessed,
And in firm lock-step, whose tread
Resounded to Rome's purposes,
When enlegioned, with small dread

Of the present; now the future scared,
Each war veteran but the slave
Of Civil Affluence, and to whom
Right-of-way he meekly gave.

Until!—Obsequience all gone,
E'en to Senators, when now,
Like the sun emerging glorious
From a bank of clouds, the brow

Of that downcast host uplifted as
It loud shouted its “Ave!”
When fullest right-of-way was his,
Aye, against all Rome, as he,

Tribune Tiberius Gracchus, then
To that Rostrum did ascend—
Where his Father in his day had stood
As the Roman Freeman’s friend—

An young man, mildly mannered, yet
All-resolute, composed,
Whose straight lips typed their utterance,
Nought concealing, who disclosed

Front of such frank sincerity
So transparent self-intent
Lurked not, or could behind it hide.
Arguing without argument,

Nor need, the law he but rehearsed
He would have Rome reenact.
Yet his, unlike the Licinian Law,
Held each leasehood all intact

To him who held it, and to his;
Upon which should be assessed
Fixed rental; yet which reimbursed
Who thereby were dispossessed

Of ancient holdings, to the end
That small hardships need be borne
To who in good faith held their lands;
While great land-graspers were shorn

Of immemorial privilege had
Of more occupance, and insured
Against more greediness; meanwhile,
It all equities secured,

And held no rights but what it gave,
And whose grant bestowed an home
To homeless soldier dispossessed
Of his ancient rights by Rome.

This, in effect was all he urged.
But, when Gracchus looked and saw
The rich man on the outskirts sneer
At this righteous poor-man's law,

Their clients' interrupting, then,
Like a bow, his straight lips bent,
When, with its twang, a sneer-barbed shaft
Of sharp irony he sent

With an incisiveness which pierced
Thro Plutocracy's mailed crest
To cut as with conviction, when
He Democracy addressed

As veterans of his Father's fields—
While his own sword was annealed
In the war-flame of their loyalty—
And to whom he thus appealed;

*The savage beasts of Italy
For their refuge and repose
Hath each its den; while valorous men
Wont to war their Country's foes,*

*And expose life for its safety, whom
'Tis Rome's pleasure to employ,
Save light to see, and air to breathe
Pray, what more do they enjoy?*

*Who, having house nor settlement,
Yet with wives and children, fain
Constrained, must wander without homes
Until reconstrained again*

*By commanders at the Army's head
Who exhort them once more fight
For 'Altars and for Sepulchres!'
How ridiculous! to incite*

*Old soldiers thus to valor when
Aim for them must lack all end
With homes, nor altars of their own,
Much less monuments defend!*

*And yet you fight but to be maimed,
And to speak not of the slain,
To thenceforth live in poverty
But to other's wealth maintain!*

*You, styled, 'the Masters of the World',
And yet where, by records shown,
Have you one single foot of ground
Now to rightly call your own?*

Which words, historical, appealed
But to Passion! Aye, But yet
That history but repeats itself
We should wisely not forget;

More, that all truth is two-edged, and
Who tho it does make appeal
To peoples' passions must in turn
Find its other edge of steel

Doth likewise cut. As Gracchus found
When, with most consummate art,
Plutocracy now hurled its shaft
At Democracy; which dart

As well struck home, when wealth appealed
To the passion of distrust
Of people in the Public Faith;
While self-interest it thrust

Between—to claim, Octavius,
And his fellow tribune, might
Postpone vote till both terms expired
By his ancient veto-right.

With whom Tiberius plead in vain,
When he fain would reimburse
His friend for lands held forfeit, yet
Gracchus' drawing forth his purse

Had no effect. Yet, fatal act!
For as votes are reimbursed
Thro funds or friendship, in-so-far
Is Democracy accursed!

When now, thro his tribunal power,
Gracchus then did interdict
All public business; locked Rome's vaults
To disbursements thus restrict.

To in the interim bring forth
A more sweeping, harsher law
Which from the Senate to his side
Did the common people draw;

As he from Reason now appealed
To the passions; by which stroke
He laid an arbitrary axe
To the trunk of Roman oak,

To Revolutionize, yet which
Rome's problems failed to solve.
How fast all revolutions once
Set revolving do revolve

Thro passions set in motion! Then,
When election day rolled round
Plutocracy removed the urns,
And Democracy was found

In overwhelming numbers armed.
When past-Consul Fulvius came,
With Manlius, a patriot of
That most honored name,

Beseeching Gracchus to desist,
While from their far-seeing eyes
Flowed friendship's tears. When now he asked
What their wisdom would advise?

Each shook his head, while pointing him
To the Senate. When again
The Tribune climbed its hundred steps,
As before, but all in vain,

For, the Senate's body owned by Wealth,
Thro its members, heart and hand
Could feel nor act, less, hear or see
Saving at its head's command.

Once more he with Octavius plead,
As a patriot, would he not
Allow the vote? But no, his friend
Had already cast his lot

Against who put it in his hands.
When Gracchus' action closed
The strife; when first a Tribune was
From his tribunate deposed

In sixty and three hundred years.
Thus the power to make unmade;
While Rome's ancient Constitution's say
By its sayers was unsaid!

Aye, so firmly fixed was Roman faith
In her Tribunes that they must
The People's wishes always voice
That none had disproved her trust

Until today; nor till today
Had one's self-interest proved
Inimical to public faith,
Or had Tribune been removed.

Nor till today had people dared,
Lacking power, to lop away
Dead branch of Constitution's trunk.
Then, what may we think today

Of faith so fixed and steadfast? Or,
Of a man who had respect
But for his selfish interests
To from such great faith deflect?

Or, of a manhood that should thus
His constituents represent
With such high-handedness, and yet
With no selfish low intent?

This may we say, moreover, pray
That should ever time arise
When right seems wrong, or wrong seems right
May God help us to be wise!

Chapter IV.

The royal lion, unlike beasts
Of a less or lower state,
Provides for and protects its young,
Tho conjointly with its mate,

With such paternal providence
That himself in times of dearth
Grows lank and lean, gaunt, flabby-flanked
For the welfare of their birth.

Too, when tawny Tiber's roar is heard
In the North by sun parched South
Soon it follows bounding to bring flood
Which enslakes each thirsty mouth

Of streamlets in its lowlands with
A quick flowage full and free
Whose rising flowtide fed away
It ebbs gauntly to the sea.

And thus with a paternal care
Doth each natural kingdom suit
Its providence to every state
Which its laws do constitute.

So, sovereign constitutions should
Both protect what they create
Parentally, nor less, provide
For each exigence of State

With exercised prerogative
Over which their powers extend;
While yet no act of lawlessness
Can they lawfully defend.

But, when man's profit, or mere sport
Drives gaunt lion to its den
To hear its whelpings whine for food
In their hungriness; or when,

Thro river's tributaries closed
By obstructions, or its banks
Lie parched thro wanton wastefulness;
And they either on their flanks,

Thro dearth, lie panting with distress;
Then, beware! that famished beast,
Or of thirsty channel when pent skies
Thro a cloudburst are released.

More, beware! When greedy Avarice
An unjust advantage takes
Of Constitution's letter, yet
The true spirit of it breaks,

To hold but civil natural laws;
Too, when driven to despair
Bond freemen see their children want
As from Hell, from such beware!

Still, Rome's constitution stood intact,
By centuries, longer than
Such instruments known hitherto
For good State had governed man.

Tho Roman necks were often galled
Thro its chafing of tough oak,
Rough hewed, and so ill-fitting was
This uncouth old-fashioned yoke,

Both unwieldy and unyielding, yet
To hold back, as well as draw
Served Senate with the Commons yoked
As they bore Rome's Ark of Law

On the highway of Democracy,
And whereon they stumbled, when
The Ark was jarred, which an young man
Would hand-steady, then, nay then

Ancient History did repeat itself!
Still, this jar might prove but shock,
Scarce more than grazing of its keel
By a ship on sunken rock

Which quick turn of its helm had cleared,
Or to sheer it from its edge
Into safe water; yet, alack!
This sunk rock now proved a ledge.

Struck from lack of proper piloting!
Be the answer aye, or nay
Rome's Ship of State had shoaled before
To again get under way.

N'er launched was Ship of Liberty
But whose bottom in some storm
Had not at times grazed rock, or shoaled
Which some timely used reform,

As wise casting over lading, saved.
Now, in her crisis, which—
Should Rome cast the poor man's equities
Or the exactions of her rich?

So, once more her constitution held,
While Rome's righted Prow of State
Sailed with such help, and little harm
As the casting over weight

Of selfish young Octavius, both
By the Common's vote and wish,
Who dropped where he could meditate
In the belly of the fish,

Called State Expediency, upon
What might constitute a flaw
In constitution which proved bad,
Unconstitutional, good law!

And yet the question may be asked,
Had the people not to pay
Too much for land at such price? When
He, with speciousness, said, Nay.

As Tiberius Gracchus saw their act
Filled the people with affright,
As fully they now realized
This illegal action might

Work ill. When thus he answered them:

*"While Rome holds inviolate
A Tribune whom the people holds
Sacrosanct and consecrate;*

*But contumelious, should he oppress,
Or let suffrage be attacked,
Thro lapse of duty or neglect,
Which would abrogate the pact*

*Between such people and himself;
Were it otherwise, he might
Destroy her Capitol, or fire
Roman Arsenal by night;*

*While in who dare make such attempts
A bad Tribune should we see;
While who assails the public power
Is no Tribune, nor should be.*

*Is it not inconceivable
That a Tribune should have power
To imprison the people's Consul, while
They lack right to disendower,*

*Degrade him should he use his place
To the people's detriment,
When both hold office by its votes
That imply a full consent?"*

* * * * *

And more. But all de facto, vain
When the people's race was run
This apologia for the prize
Which illegally was won.

What's in a name? Alas! not much.
And yet all of Gracchus' blame,
And shame, ill fame was all incurred
By and thro the public's name.

Against whom the Republic turned,
For it was a Consular,
And large holder of the public lands,
One Publius Nasica,

Who led the Senate, following Hate,
As he threw his purple gown
About his head, for shame, no doubt,—
While who struck young Gracchus down

Was Publius Saturnius,
A Tribune; whose defense
Did Publius Sceviola make
On the spurious pretense

That he acted for the public weal,
Thus by three who had been named
For *Rei Publica* at birth
Rome's republic was defamed.

Now while but little lies in names,
And less in apologies,
There does lie something in the fact
That all great Democracies

May well consider. Such as this—
Of how vain it is to dwell
Upon a Heavenly Commonwealth
With the public damned to Hell!

Chapter V.

“Idea Romae.” Life is short,
So brief, with but a span
Time can describe what circles all
The being of a man.

When, with shoulders as the axis, now
Once let his arms rotate
They circumscribe both coming and
The going of a State;

Then, turning on some mountain height,
Enscoping Earth’s area,
Within his horizon he can
Scarce compass one idea!

With every falling grain of sand
Some human life has passed;
And with each turning of Time’s glass
Does Some Statehood see its last.

Yet lives are false, and States untrue
Unless each stand, forsooth,
On some ideal principle
Of underlying Truth!

If Rome was not the first to hold
She was to formulate,
And constitute the doctrine of
A People's Tribunate;

Which, with Gracchus first to emphasize,
He was not last to find
That ills before may far outweigh
Much of past good behind;

To find, what men of State have found,
And statesmen ever will,
While spirit of just law gives life
Its mere letter held, may kill.

Yet, the Roman Idea now rang true
When beneath his sturdy stroke
Which lopped a rotten bough, it struck
Sound trunk of virile oak.

So this young Roman Tribune stood
As the first one who dared
To right Rome's constitution, wrong,
Unlawfully, yet declared

The "Roman Idea" must prevail,
To hold inviolate
Its spirit, but mere letter void,
Of the People's Tribunate

Which stood intact to represent
Democracy, and give
State sovereignty but in-so-far
As 'twas representative.

Could our wide fertile fields have voice
To speak of what befell
Life's manhood which brot them to yield,
How would they love to dwell

On prowess of brave pioneers;
Good missionaries who bore
The cross that others wear Life's crown;
Deft woodsmen ways explore

And blaze for brawny axemen who
Laid forest giants low
That faithful plowmen might break ground
For wise schoolmen of the hoe

To plant, then till about Truth's shoots,
And pluck each noxious weed
Which else might nullify the work
Of men who did precede.

Yet, could they, would these fertile fields
Now carping criticize
The oft mistakes of who mistook
Unwisdom for things wise?

Or, when beneath some mouldering trunk
Tilth finds a broken man
Beside his rusted axeblade, who
Here fell upclearing, can

It tax his folly? Not while fields
Bedew with sacred tears,
As price of their fertility,
Graves of martyred pioneers!

Or, could Civil Rights, incarnate, speak
To tithe its sad whole told—
What tales of moral heroism
Could it with truth unfold

Of Freedom's evolution which
Evolved the man from brute,
To oft relapse, smug sophistries,
How many, to refute!

Tell, with arms outstretched how motherhood
For her children made appeal,
When, fatherhood, all but crushed down,
Felt but the tyrant's heel;

When, with scarce strength enough to rise,
Life ebbing, on his son
Shift freedom's heavy burdens, who,
Thus handicapped, must run

His father's yet unfinished course,
When, grandsire in blind age
Now prayed, "How long, O Lord, how long
Wilt Thou let the heathen rage!"

When, hundred years, and centuries
Elapsed, and yet, alas!
When, faith felt if there was a God,
His heavens were as brass!

And yet, and yet could Civil Rights,
Evolved thus, criticize,
To carping sneer at who mistook
Unwisdom for things wise!

And last. With such a pretty land,
From wilds redeemed, as stage;
Where, with man's civil rights as cast;
With costly equipage,

Free worship, with free justice courts
Free schools, free labor, and
Free institutions, with free man,
And, withal, a great free land;

Where, with unities ununified
Of action, time, and place;
Where, leading men play ill-starred; and
Where, villain wears the face

Of honesty; where, right plays wrong;
Where, vice as virtue-masked;
Where, fools play sage, whose sage plays fool;
Where, good is over tasked,

Yet underrated; yet where wrong
Is e'er condoned; and where,
The senators play demagogue,
Where tribunes act not fair;

Where, lines are but mouthed into phrase,
To with platitude smooth parse;
Where, Democracy's great tragedy
Seems played here as but farce!

Which should Freedom carp to criticize?
Nay, nay! against such odds
The spectacle is well worth while
Both the sight of men and gods!

For, Freedom on its stage of Life
Plays for no harlot's kiss,
Or fool's applause; no more withdraws
For carping critic's hiss.

Less, how Life plays, more, what is played
Whose curtains fall to rise
When freedom often may mistake
Unwisdom for things wise.

A Freeman's life when lived at best
Is but idea beclad,
Or thought incarnate, Death may strip
To by others yet be had

To dominate, predominate
And held as truth to be—
Tho false times hinder—and to hold
Thro all Eternity.

Did Tiberius Gracchus, Tribune, act
But for plaudit? place? renown?
Was he a demagogue? or, worse,
Would he have from Rome, a crown?

—But an youthful axeman who essayed
What his elders did appall,
Who would lop off a rotten branch
And was crushed beneath its fall!

Chapter VI.

While diplomacy hath many tongues
And varied forms of speech
To thought reveal, or else conceal,
With significance to each;

So various expressions, too,
It wears as garbs designed
To clear or cloak, and to make plain,
Or to, maybe, mask its mind.

So matronly proud Mother Rome,
And as housewife prescient,
Who believed that omens did presage,
Or foreshadowed each event

That happened in her household; while
Her son's Tiberius, eyes
Perused earth's portents, now hers read
From the pages of the skies;

While he saw, humanly, events
Did follow a known cause,
She, divinely, held the Elements
Did precede them by fixed laws.

That night, with pillows often turned,
As were her thoughts, Rome lay,
Foreboding, how that she should meet
The dread Future's Coming Day.

When, between the first and second cockcrow,
Deep mutterings were heard
As Albanus, warden of the hills,
Rose majestic with the third;

Yet not sun-tipped, and crowned with light,
Before the day, for now
A lowering, dark and threatening cloud
Did all overhang his brow,

Black as the ravens which Rome held
Portended Gracchus' doom
But yesterday; whence baleful eyes
Now outshot to pierce the gloom;

As from the upper Umbrians
Was heard the distant roar
Of ravening Tiber seeking prey
On-thundering at Rome's door

With loud reverberations that
Shook foundation stones which lay
Beneath Rome's seven hills. And thus
Was the scowling Coming Day

Now ushered in by whispering Fear,
As all the voice he had
Dared not be uttered. Where Day stood,
In dun sombre garments clad,

Over against the Capitol;
Whose eyes this fateful morn
Flashed vividly with angry glance
As they fell upon, to scorn

Rome at his feet; whose palaces
And white temples, erst so brave,
Now trembling shook like gibbering ghosts.
Thus, as in silence of the grave,

Dark Coming Day in stillness stood
With no increasing light.
Was this the dawn of her new day,
Or the gloaming of Rome's night?

It must mean night; for fowls from coops
Seemed all affrighted back
As in the eventide. So, too,
Roman citizens, alack,

Emerged from—but to home again.
When, a portent now was seen
Far more portentous; as upon
Crest of high Mount Aventine,

Amid its whitened monuments,
Villas, temples stood a group
Of low pitched tents, before which now
Seemed high palaces to stoop,

As in obeisance, whence was waft
A muffled sobbing wail
Of hurrying wives to refuge seek
Where its quest did not avail.

When, louder Tiber's roar was heard;
Then, with an instant flash
An ancient oak trunk now was hurled
To his foaming jaws with crash

Like to a constitution felled
And hurled into a flood
Of lawlessness! Which could not wash
From her Forum the first blood

Of her last century, just begun,
Which, increasing, yet should drown
The Republic in a bloody sea
Ere Augustus wore Rome's crown!

Three hundred bludgeoned in one day!
On whose bodies were not found
A spear's thrust, or one sword's cut, all
Slain without a battle-wound.

Three hundred bludgeoned! Tombs denied
To each, as well as home,
And yet to think that every breast
Had been often scarred for Rome!

Three hundred who were blindly led
By a leader who today
Could no more see, or say to them,
Nor they answer aye, or nay.

Three hundred now, which half score years
Will multiply by ten.
So great the cost of Civil Rights
When the price is paid in men!

BOOK III.

Chapter I.

*Ah, Life's voices, virile voices
Thro which fertile minds are brought
To conception by implanting
Germinating seeds of thought!*

Had the Coming Day elected
Wisely, or had he no choice,
Treating for the August Future,
When he chose Tiberius' voice,

So soon stilled, who might have chosen
One Experience had proved,
Both on field, and in Rome's Forum
Wiser; then why not behooved

That great Scipio Numantinus
So well versed in Roman laws,
Apt in art of legislation,
Should have voiced the Peoples' cause,

To convince, and will conviction
In that with which he had concurred,
Nor contest the constitution,
Why was Scipio's not Preferred?

*Long-lived voices, world-heard voices
Of old statesman, seer, or sage
May say less than Youth made vocal
With ideals of his Age!*

With each great idea goes utterance,
With strong hands to do its task,
With fleet feet to do its mission,
With no choice—nor need to ask,

When the very times have utterance,
Why Day does pass Wisdom, and
Upon inexperienced Folly,
So accounted, lay command?

Nay, he knows in certain crises
Wisdom bends, knowledge may bind;
While Experience heeds Expedience;
To but in rash Folly find

Will with all-impelling impulse.
Tho, apparently, unwise,
Still, thro Motive set in motion
Idea breeds to Enterprise

Thus begetting action. Romans
Saw more purpose in straight flight
Of a raven, than Jove's eagle
Perched upon Olympian height;

More in elemental motion
Than the Great Sea in repose;
More, than in dumb acquiescence,
The loud warcry of their foes.

*Voices, voices all-impelling
Manhood into action may
Tell far more for human freedom
Than its voiceless tomes may say!*

Wiser than a listless Senate
Legislates a floating straw;
Wiser knave who knows its license
Than just judge who issues law

On whose bench he sits supinely
To enforcement; and, for aye,
Wiser may the Common's folly
Voice the mind of Coming Day

Than a Senate's wit-wise silence.
Ignorance with wide-open eyes
Wiser sees than hoodwinked Knowledge;
Fools say than the tongue-tied wise!

For, once loosed, unleavened logic,
That interprets true the mind
Of its day, to wrest its meaning
Dogmatists can break nor bind.

Oft, than crowned head stately nodding
With stuffed axioms of State,
Grins more statecraft from the empty
Fool's skull that becrows his gate!

Spake not dead slaves more for freedom
Than live freemen all beside
When Rome's plutocratic Consuls
Twenty thousand crucified?

*Life's loud voices, thrilling voices,
All-impelling, sung or said,
Often are far less compelling
Than still speech of silent dead!*

When she stilled that of Tiberius
With, "Ad Tiberim!" the wave
Of still Tiber was made vocal
To return the voice Rome gave,

Rising higher, sinking lower—
Was it panting of a beast,
Lying perdue with its hunger,
Or engorgement after feast?

Yet so many Roman voices
Venal Wealth, by gold, had stilled;
Or, thro power, with place, her Senate
Had controlled them as it willed,

While still more it awed to silence.
Never had Rome been so dumb
As when, ceaseless as its flowing,
Tiber ever whispered, "Come!"

Calling, calling, ever calling—
Could Youth's hearing but make sure
As between the call of Wisdom,
Or of Folly to allure;

Call of Vice or call to Virtue;
Call of Sire, or Sirens' wiles;
Call of Manhood to high purpose,
Or low Pleasure who beguiles?

*Ah! these voices, calling voices,
Call they as the voice of Truth?
Or of Falsehood? Old Age deafened,
Oftener heard by listening Youth.*

Caius eared, nor listened listless,
But who loins of Mind did gird,
With enduement of Endeavor,
As in Tiber's voice he heard

That which Rome, thro long years deafened
Thro Complacency, heard not,
While his manhood's strong Will fibred
Hers Wealth withered by dryrot.

Caius Gracchus ten years listened
To his martyred brother's voice;
“Come!” Tiberius’ called, “Come, Caius!
Rome has left you now no choice,

Nor escape, why do you tarry?
Ours means life of martyrdom;
Spend the one to buy the other
In the people’s service. Come!”

Thus, from early adolescence,
Day and night he heard this voice
Of his elder brother calling.
When of service he made choice.

*Ah! Life's voices, calling voices;
All-impelling, good or ill;
Tho one may not stay their calling
He may answer as he will.*

Chapter II.

Vain, to predicate the flow
Of a river on its source;
Or its volume to foretell
Till told influents on its course;

Nor foresay its current's force.
Until known its channels, and
What obstructions it must meet,
And what obstacles withstand.

When, knowing all, or nought of these
Certain that, eventually,
It perforce of natural laws,
Must find outlet in the sea

To commingle waters; when,
Spilled, nor spent one drop in vain
To free fountains on the hills,
Circuiting, 'twill come again;

Whence, descending from the clouds
It will feed spent springs once more,
Thence, replenished, undiminished
To flow seaward as before.

Thus, with Life's springs of human action.
Vain to first foretell their flow
Till foretold their rising source
Definitely; or foreknow,

To their outflows predicate,
Till one knows what did precede,
Influents, motive, purpose all
That might influence the deed.

Still, who scopes virile manhood best
Knows despite obstruction, course,
Windings, turning on itself,
With an all-propelling force

Must, thro course of natural law
Of Life's innate and impent,
Yet unto its purpose come,
And, thro action, find event.

Strenuous living! Life's enough.
Never yet lay manhood dead,
More than valleys of the earth,
Each some ancient river's bed,

May no more be reckoned with
By live waters; be their source
From pent skies, or earth surcharged,
In the course of time, perforce

Of Life's fixed eternal law
That sweeps waters to the sea,
And returns thro uplift. So
Manhood lifts Humanity.

Which Tiberius' manhood proved,
Whom Rome held as he was not,
With his grave unmarked, to find
In one decade on each lot

Of full three score thousand homes
His fixed monuments of stone.
Now, sixty generations passed
Gracchan-landmarks are our own.

When the elder's providence
Did his younger brother mark,
One of three, to lands allot
Nothing strange that he should hark

Back to voice which bade him on;
Nor to call of duty shirk.
Landmarks must be further set;
Younger finish elder's work,

Thus to bring ill times to good,
Good to better, nor to rest
Till for human brotherhood
Younger brothers do their best!

Caius, younger but by years,
Yet, for all that had been done,
Or should be, these were reversed
To the less prove larger one,

Who to manhood came with Grief;
Called to duty by foul Wrong;
And by harsh Experience made,
Thro great burden-bearing, strong.

Nature largely gives but once.
If its fruitfulness be rife
In its youth, its age must lack
Fruitage from the Tree of Life.

So with man. Through youth to age
It oft gives to him renown,
Still, both sides of fifty years
Rarely does man wear Life's crown;

Rarer still, with lavish hand,
Mother Nature to son gives
Varied excellencies with
Multiplied prerogatives;

While yet rarest, gifted youth,
Cognizant of his great dower,
As did Caius Gracchus bring
Buds of promise to full flower.

All Rome's influence was his;
All Rome's power to move, and will
All who heard his utterance,
All-impelling, to fulfill.

While innate his varied gifts
Caius cultured each with art,
Soldier, statesman, orator
And athlete; yet, withal, heart

Was the soil on which they grew.
What the part without Life's whole?
What its whole while purposeless?
What Life's purpose lacking soul?

Land allotments finished, then
Vengeance for his brother's death
Caius' hatred now conceived,
But to die a stillborn death

At Cornelia's word. Who said—
“Nought more glorious to me
Than retaliation fall
On my enemies, could it be

Without ruin to the State;
Yet far better they remain
All unwhipped, a thousand times!
Than my Country suffer.” Fain

Must the son obey a voice
By whose precepts he was bred;
Thro whose words his brother was
To his great achievements led

Where he died unsepulchred.
So her last son had no choice
But to turn from vengeance. Yet,
Heard he not Ambition's voice?

Rivers pure, and high of source—
Tho they slake a thirsty land
Bounteous with beneficence,
Needs, perforce, on either hand

More or less corruption drain
Thro large, and ill influents fed—
Must at times rise to floodtide
To much devastation spread.

So; risen from uplands high and pure
Flows the current of reform;
When, swelled by evil influence,
Or cloudburst of Passion's storm,

May work harm where it should help,
And thro wrong undoing make
Not for righteousness, instead,
But a terrible mistake.

Vain, to say necessity
To the wrong may right compel
As to say Heaven may be brot
Down to earth by raising Hell !

Who plants thistles to kill tares
That his corn may have the field
Needs must find such killing gives
Larger life to thistle-yield.

Or, when constitution but
Constitutes constituent's ill
It's own cure it must conclude,
By conclusions drawn, to kill !

When the Senate, in the wrong,
This sharp instrument now wedged
Between the people and their rights
It was found to be two-edged;

And, when, seditiously, it laid
Their sedition it soon learned
That its counter cutting edge
Then upon itself was turned.

So, when yielding to their law,
As it was compelled to yield,
In the bludgeoning it's friends
Now seditiously a field

Wide as Roman state it sowed
With sedition which destroyed
Law's beneficence to make
All Rome's constitution void.

If Ambition Caius led
So the Brothers by the same
All-impelling power were borne,
Separate born, tho of one name

With which they swept all before,
Under influence good and bad,
Yet with course beneficent,
Each a like ambition had;

Then, about the Sacred Isles
Of man's martyrdom be twain,
To at length united be
In Time's ever widening main.

Chapter III.

Man has ever held, innately,
When a pregnant Age gives birth
To an issue of great moment,
Which involves mankind, the earth

Wracked with pangs of pain portentous
Groans upheaving; while the eyes
Of the conscious Heavens flash lurid
Ere they close on darkened skies.

But law of association?
Still, while Superstition goes
With crass Ignorance, led by Folly,
Comes more wisdom than Man knows!

By coincidence most curious,
History cites:—ere Caius' death
Enceladus, Etnian giant,
Spumed forth with a fiery breath;

While the paps of Earth this season
Swelled with red Falernian wine
Heady, fierce intoxicating
From each overladen vine;

Which, when ripened, maddened Marius;
And made Scylla drunk to flood
All of Italy with carnage,
Worse, with fratricidal blood

To Rome's ruin. Both her offspring,
She their mother, teacher, guide;
Each patrician, and yet Scylla
Whored, while Caius, working, died.

Scylla's vicious youthful manhood
Saw these grapes grown; heard the tread
At the winepress; felt the earthquake;
Gazed on portents overhead.

While the grapevines of this vintage
Most were Gracchan-planted. Ah,
How purblind is Man's discernment
From the rising of his star

To high Zenith till its setting!
Thus while one did plant his field
Without heeding portents, other
Reaped its most portentous yield.

Now, as then, the Heavens foreknowing
Warns the one who plants the vine
With some token, that the winepress,
By Law trodden, may run wine

Which makes one with wisdom wiser,
To with folly make drunk nine!
Thus it doth behoove vine-planters
From the Heavens to seek some sign.

Must chaos precede creation?
As thought follows after dream?
Must a flood of devastation
Flow with every mountain stream?

Man must learn his limitations
Thro the boundlessness of skies;
Must be taught Law's observation
Whose observance should make wise!

Errant are most human fluxions
Which lack logic, while they draw
To most logical conclusions
Thro a fixed inerrant law

Moral, cosmic, or yet chemic,
Which alike must work perforce
Of law which lets waters equal,
Yet not rise above their source.

But to point of saturation,
Too, may known solution rise,
More produce precipitation,
Or cause it to crystallize.

Stated heat will melt all metals,
More is like to sublime,
While a fiercer one makes gaseous
To consume. And so with State.

Static laws, too, govern statehood,
Which, reformed for good, work ill
If reform to reformation
Goes not with statecraft's wise skill.

Had the Gracchi this? or raised they
Genii which they could not lay?
Or, thro power, set that in motion
Each was powerless to stay?

And blew heat which melted metal
Which right motive might not mold?
Or, and worse, dissimulating,
Blew with one breath hot and cold?

Wisdom asked—when Folly pertly
Answered with his ancient fling—
Old as man, yet new as maudlin—
“Nay, but either would be king!”

Else, “It is not democratic!”
Who “Imperialism” brays
As all new ideas he hails with
Some dead and bedamned old phrase.

Or, when big idea advances,
“Stop it!” mouths the little mind,
Or, when master-head arises
“Lop it!” howls the servile hind,

Always apt to ape an anarch,
(Passing strange! who lions pass
Without fear oft scare when challenged
By loud braying of an ass.)

So, today, as it was ever,
Anarchism needs must yell
At who fain would head—to show it
Out the nearest way from Hell!

All Republics are imperial,
While Democracies are strong
In-so-far as they fear only
What is unjust, mean and wrong!

While imperialism which threatens
Each lies less in lifted crown
Than from sovereign manhood lowered
To clutch at what lets it down;

Less, from donning by the subject
Purples of a reigning king,
More, the doffing of high manhood
And being subject to low thing!

This then was the Gracchan idea,
Imperialistic in emprise,
From Rome's solvent constitution
To crown jewels crystallize,

When, cast from fierce fires of ambition,
Mount them in its golden crown,
Symbolizing sovereign statehood,
To Democracy's renown,

Intact hold royal traditions,
When, defections thus impeared,
Crown with diadem of Justice
Rome Queen-Empress of the World,

When, thro power lodged in the People,
Senator turn Citizen,
Whom, from Senate in the Forum
Gracchus turned and spoke to men;

Where, Plutocracy behind him,
In Democracy he saw
Rome's great future. Still, the Senate
Blind to portent of the straw,

Saw too late to stay its progress
In Law's current as it whirled
Mammon should not rule but Manhood,
Men, not Money, Roman world.

What a grand imperial idea!
More, wise Caius would create
Affluence as a mighty buttress
To, thro service, strengthen State.

Wealth that should serve State, now mastered;
Wealth that should have State obeyed;
Wealth that should have helped State, hindered;
Wealth that should beget, betrayed

Roman valor, Roman virtue;
What should nurture Roman health,
Roman strength and standing sickened
Rome thro venal Roman wealth.

Must man e'er be cursed thro blessings?
Must man's good to ill impel?
Must man's Heaven-sent gifts impoverish
Man to gnaw his nails in Hell?

It would seem so! Thus Republics
Have less cause to fear the rule
Of who would be king imperial
Than who is imperious fool!

Caius saw, to recognize the
Powers of Wealth, and understood
How in proper channels Commerce
Might inure to Roman good

When he halved the Senate's powers,
By its numbers doubling, and
Plutocrat made with Patrician
Equal in its chamber stand;

As he added Wealth's three hundred,
Who before had market made
Of the Senatehouse, to henceforth
Legislate just laws for trade;

For which he now built straight highways,
Public, that trade bear its load
To Rome's markets without hindrance,
Or by crooked private road.

When, he saw to it each soldier
Might thro service win an home.
And, while he no whit detracted
From the central power of Rome,

He would have her walls encircle—
Increase City into State
Thro the colonizing Romans
Oversea. New courts create

Of integrity before which
Rich and poor might each plead cause,
One no gainer, or one loser
Thro miscarried Roman laws.

Thus he laid more stress on Justice,
And on Legislation less,
When he held that a Republic
Should be ruled by Righteousness,

Nor without which could be freemen,
Nor freemen be fully free;
Nor, withal, could there be freedom,
Nor a true Democracy.

While unwise some undertakings,
Time-untempered, he foresaw,
Nor untimely, and most wisely,
Uniformity of law

Rome most lacked. Thus he provided,
Not by money, but thro men
Civic rule, nor with the bloodshed
Of a single citizen.

Aye, a bloodless revolution
Brot about within the hour;
Thus—the Gracchan reformation
Thro no arbitrary power,

Save that lodged within the Tribunes,
Backed up by the People's will:
Altho much of benefaction
Did the Senate frustrate. Still

Revolutions keep revolving
Then as now, and will alway,
While, in turn, each one must reckon
With the Future's Coming Day!

Chapter IV.

While he was rebuilding Carthage,
As Junonia, anew
Came a storm which snapped his standards,
And most Gracchus' offerings blew

To fierce wolves, nor stayed his working,
Tho they carried off by stealth
All set landmarks; by which Juno,
Stern Goddess of War, and Wealth,

Testified her dire displeasure;
Ominous, still, Caius saw
In all this but legislation
Of Life's common natural law.

Yet Law legislates thro omens
Both of earth and in the skies.
But, who aphorism aptly
Of his Age reads is most wise!

As who sees too much sees little,
While who sees less sees far more;
But, who sees too much, or little
Sees, thereafter, to deplore!

He who, heretofore, the People
Would address must Senate face;
Yet, this precedent unheeding,
Gracchus faced the populace,

But to see who scouts observance
Should see to it he observe
What comes of unobservation,
Lest, by that wherein he swerve,

He be swung. While, too, observing
That a leader who would lead
From established ways his following,
To old precedents unheed,

Should himself be well established.
So, whose breath blows new reform
Should securely fix old standards
'Gainst the upblowing of storm.

Last, who propitiates, thro giving
To the people's gods, should heed
Both sky-omens and earth-portents
Lest his offerings but wolves feed.

Caius, natural laws observing,
Failed to see when hoisting sail
But to catch the People's favor,
He might, thereby, catch a gale

Which authority might founder
On the shoals of anarchy;
Now, this act of catching favor
Is mere matter of Degree!

When Statehood is bought thro promise,
By which principal is paid,
Markets must heed well both maxims
And the principles of Trade.

As who pays free corn for franchise
All the corn in sight should bin;
With bestowal of large favors
Who would public favor win;

Must, himself be its chief patron
Who would pay with patronage;
More, who would be served by craftiness
Should pay craft its highest wage;

Last, who bids for votes in Forum,
With its Rostrum auction block,
Where is sold to highest bidder
Freeman's franchise but as stock,

To the Heavens should look for pointers,
Lest in Hell Republics free
Find themselves accursed with freedom
Bound by damned Plutocracy.

Where, if thus comes "the wealth of Nations"
And if they thus State's rights secure,
To buy thus a rich Republic
May God grant to keep ours poor!

Still, as true as Truth the maxim
States must pay Right's market price;
Or less true State—virtue never
Should be had at cost of vice.

And thus Gracchus, nobly impelled,
Idead with a great reform,
Caught this ichor, then so catching,
To fall itching. Yet which storm

Octopus of reformation
Whirled to quicksands more than rock,
Anarch less, more hydra-headed,
Grasping, while it grinned, to mock,

Sucking blood, yet without bloodshed.
Drove the Senate to outbid
All his bidding, out-reforming
His reforms, as it lay hid

Back of Tribune Livius Drusus,
Tribune Gracchus to outdo
With twelve colonies where Caius
Only had suggested two.

Gracchus gave homesteads on rental,
Drusus proffered all lands free.
Gracchus would have given Romans
Equal rights; while Drusus' plea

Was for larger rights for Latins.
Thus was Gracchus' rule outruled;
Re-reformed his reformations.
And thus were the people fooled

By a trick as old as falsehood,
Yet by subterfuge as new
As political chicanery's
Last reforms today can do!

Thus the standards, set by Gracchus
To rebuild the Roman State
Were storm-snapped; with pious offering
Blown to wolfish greed. By Fate!

What is Fate? Well worth considering:
Life's inexorable laws,
Most beneficently fateful,
Give to hungry wolves fierce jaws

Which, thro logical conclusion,
Must be fed, and this thro stealth,
Which wolves all possess in common.
So, too, with a commonwealth,

Thro the selfsame laws of nature,
Which, if it to Avarice breed
Wolfish tendencies, e'er venal,
Avariciously must feed.

Logical conclusions ever
Must be cruel as is Fate,
And as well be hydra-headed
When an anarchistic State

Grows an head on every faction;
Whose bad laws must be obeyed
Both in Ethics and Religion,
As in Statehood so with Trade.

And if Statehood, by greed blinded,
Can't Time's tendencies discern,
Nor see omens, nor read portents
Must from fatal blindness learn!

Ten years since Tiberius Gracchus
To the Tiber had been swept
With three hundred of his following.
Still whose brother, Caius, kept

Yet his faith in Roman manhood;
Worked his work, and said his say;
Marked his course, to follow in it,
And, like him, he went his way

To the Tiber, while his following,
Each a Roman citizen,
Shot to death by Cretan archers
Now was multiplied by ten.

Thus began the dire beginning
Of her last sad century
As Republic. With the ending
Of Rome's free democracy,—

Thousands multiplied by hundreds,
While Fate's fratricidal blood
Which insensate ravening Tiber
Fed her fishes thro the flood

Of a lawless legislation,
And development of jaw,
When Rome changed five times in forty
Years its venal Courts of Law.

Thus, moreover, each Republic,
Having lost its head, may see—
Nothing! Yet, as seen by others,
Plutocratic Anarchy.

With the Senate's vote, "tumultus"—
By a legal fiction which
Raised a tumult—now the Consul,
L. Opimius, surnamed, rich,

Who had wealth as Senate power,
But thro pride and purchase, led
Mercenaries 'gainst the Commons,
When he offered for its head

Weight in gold. Rome must be wealthy,
Or her people wretched poor
When of Roman heads the brainiest
Of them all to thus secure.

Yet with gold the Senate bought it
Of a Tribune, and thus made
Anarchy of her Headless Commons
By the natural law of Trade!

When Opimius, rich but pious,
Temple to Concordia built,
Tho three thousands' blood of patriots
He in discord thus had spilt.

Aye, Plutocracy was pious,
And despite the righteous odds
Of Democracy against it
Could buy favor of its gods;

And whose piety in portents
And in omens never saw,
Altho Justice had been vanquished,
But the triumphing of Law!

While the sapient Seviola,
Of her lawyers held most wise,
Held the Senate's action legal
To its powers thus exercise.

Which expedience wise Caiaphas
Counseled to the Jewish plot
That one man die for the people
That the nation perish not.

And so then, as it is ever,
Must expedience sequence draw
To the logical conclusion
Rich expedience is poor law!

One omen more. When unarmed Gracchus
To Diana's Temple fled
To find refuge and protection,
Found in vain he here was led,

For no peering on her pureness
Brooked Diana; thence Fate drove,
By Law's logical conclusion,
Him to the fierce Furies' Grove.

Too, so, then, as it is ever,
Who would in Republics find
Utter nakedness, he better
By the Fates have been made blind.

Cruel logical conclusions!
May God open so our eyes
To the fate of Rome's sad last, that
Our first Centuries shall be wise!









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